

in, in company with several colonists, among whom was Mr. Hamilton Brown, representative for the parish of St. Ann, in the Colonial Assembly. Some reference having been made to the new Order in Council, I was rather startled to hear that gentleman swear by his Maker that that Order should never be adopted in Jamaica; nor would the planters of Jamaica, he said, permit the interference of the Home Government with their slaves in any shape. A great deal was said by him and others, present about the happiness and comfort enjoyed by the slaves, and of the many advantages possessed by them of which the poor in England were destitute. Among other circumstances mentioned in proof of this, Mr. Robinson, a wharfinger, stated that a slave in that town had sent out printed cards to invite a party of his negro acquaintance to a supper party. One of these cards was handed to Mr. Hamilton Brown, who said he would present it to the Governor, as a proof of the comfortable condition of the slave population. This, and other circumstances then mentioned, tended to confirm the notions I had brought from England respecting slavery in Jamaica; and, although I was somewhat shocked and staggered by seeing the same day the Methodist chapel at St. Ann's Bay lying in ruins, as it had been destroyed by the whites six months before, and by learning that the Missionaries were no longer permitted to preach in that parish, I nevertheless left the place next morning with my favourable impressions respecting the condition of the slaves not materially abated. These impressions, however, I was not permitted long to indulge.

"I proceeded on horseback to New Ground estate the next day. On my way thither I saw much majestic and beautiful scenery, and enjoyed the prospect exceedingly, until I came in sight of a gang of negroes at work. Most of them were females; and they were superintended by a driver, with the cart whip in his hand. Just as I rode past, the driver cracked his whip and cried out, 'Work! work!' They were manuring the canes, and carrying the manure in baskets on their heads. It appeared to me disgustingly dirty work; for the moisture from the manure was dripping through the baskets, and running down the bodies of the negroes. This sight annoyed me considerably, and raised some doubts as to the preferable condition of West India slaves to factory children. The enchanting scenery and beautiful humming birds no longer amused me; and the thundering crack of the cart-whip, sounding in my ears as I rode along, excited feelings of a very unpleasing description.

"On reaching the estate I was received in the most friendly manner by the overseer, and entertained with West Indian hospitality. This gentleman, after some enquiries as to the state of things in England, began to enlarge on the comfortable condition of the slaves; and, pointing to some negro coopers who were working in the yard, asked if I could perceive any difference between the condition of these slaves and that of an English labourer. I owned I could not: they seemed to work with great regularity and apparent good humour.

"Immediately afterwards the overseer called out, in a very authoritative tone, 'Blow shell.' A large conch shell was then blown by one of the domestic slaves, and in a few minutes four negro drivers made their appearance in front of the house, accompanied by six common negroes. The drivers had each a long staff in his hand, and a large cart-whip coiled round his shoulders. They appeared to be very stout athletic men.

They stood before the hall door, and the overseer put on his hat and went out to them, while I sat at the open window and observed the scene which followed,—having been informed that the other six negroes were to be punished.

"When the overseer went out, the four drivers gave him an account, on notched tallies, of their half day's work, and received fresh orders. The overseer then asked a few questions of the drivers respecting the offences of the six slaves brought up for punishment. No question was asked of the culprits themselves, nor was any explanation waited for. Sentence was instantly pronounced, and instantly carried into execution.

"The first was a man of about thirty-five years of age. He was what is called a pen-keeper, or cattle herd; and his offence was having suffered a mule to go astray. At the command of the overseer he proceeded to strip off part of his clothes, and laid himself flat on his belly, his back and buttocks being uncovered. One of the drivers then commenced flogging him with the cart-whip. This whip is about ten feet long, with a short stout handle, and is an instrument of terrible power. It is whirled by the operator round his head, and then brought down with a rapid motion of the arm upon the recumbent victim, causing the blood to spring at every stroke. When I saw this spectacle, now for the first time exhibited before my eyes, with all its revolting accompaniments, and saw the degraded and mangled victim writhing and groaning under the infliction, I felt horror-struck. I trembled, and turned sick: but being determined to see the whole to an end, I kept my station at the window. The sufferer, writhing like a wounded worm, every time the lash cut across his body, cried out, 'Lord! Lord! Lord!' When he had received about twenty lashes, the driver stopped to pull up the poor man's shirt (or rather smock frock,) which had worked down upon his galled posteriors. The sufferer then cried, 'Think me no man? think me no man?' By that exclamation I understood him to say, 'Think you I have not the feelings of a man?' The flogging was instantly recommenced and continued; the negro continuing to cry, 'Lord! Lord! Lord!' till thirty-nine lashes had been inflicted. When the man rose up from the ground, I perceived the blood oozing out from the lacerated and tumefied parts where he had been flogged; and he appeared greatly exhausted. But he was instantly ordered off to his usual occupation.

"The next was a young man apparently about eighteen or nineteen years of age. He was forced to uncover himself and lie down in the same mode as the former, and was held down by the hands and feet by four slaves, one of whom was a young man who was himself to be flogged next. This latter was a mulatto—the offspring, as I understood, of some European formerly on the estate by a negro woman, and consequently born to slavery. These two youths were flogged exactly in the mode already described, and writhed and groaned under the lash, as if enduring great agony. The mulatto bled most, and appeared to suffer most acutely. They received each thirty-nine lashes. Their offence was some deficiency in the performance of the task prescribed to them. They were both ordered to join their gang as usual in the afternoon at cane-cutting.

"Two young women of about the same age were, one after the other, then laid down and held by four men, their back parts most indecently uncovered, and thirty-nine lashes of the blood-stained whip inflicted upon



each poor creature's posteriors. Their exclamation likewise was 'Lord! Lord! Lord!' They seemed also to suffer acutely, and were apparently a good deal lacerated. Another woman (the sixth offender) was also laid down, and uncovered for the lash; but at the intercession of one of the drivers she was reprieved. The offence of these three women was similar to that of the two young men—some defalcation in the amount of labour.

"The overseer stood by and witnessed the whole of this cruel operation, with as much seeming indifference as if he had been paying them their wages. I was meanwhile perfectly unmanned by mingled horror and pity. Yet I have no reason to believe that the *natural* feelings of this young man (whose age did not exceed twenty-four years) were less humane or sensitive than my own. But such is the callousness which constant familiarity with scenes of cruelty engenders. He had been a book-keeper, for four years previously, on another estate belonging to the same proprietors, and had been appointed overseer on this estate only a few months before. His reception of me when I arrived was so kind, frank, and cordial, that I could not have believed him, had I not seen it with my own eyes, to be *capable* of inflicting such cruelty on a fellow-creature.

"As soon as this scene was over, the overseer came into the hall, and asked me to drink some rum and water with him. I told him I was sick, and could taste nothing: that I was in fact overwhelmed with horror at the scene I had just witnessed. He said it was not a pleasant duty certainly, but it was an indispensable one: and that I would soon get used, as others did, to such spectacles. I asked if he found it necessary to inflict such punishments frequently. He replied it was uncertain; 'I may not,' he said, 'have to do it again this month, or I may have to do it to-morrow.'

"This, my first full view of West India Slavery, occurred on the 4th of September, 1832, between twelve and two o'clock, being the day after my landing in the island, and within an hour after my arrival on the plantation.

"I resided on New Ground estate, from the time of my arrival in the beginning of September, and exclusive of some occasional absence, altogether fully seven weeks; and, during that period, I witnessed with my own eyes the *regular* flogging of upwards of twenty negroes. I heard also of many other negroes being flogged by order of the overseer and book-keepers, in the field, while I resided on the plantation, besides the cases which came under my own personal observation. Neither do I include in this account the slighter floggings inflicted by the drivers in superintending the working gangs,—which I shall notice afterwards.

"The following are additional cases of which I have a distinct recollection. But I have retained the precise date of only one of these cases (the 12th) from having found it necessary to destroy almost all my papers, in consequence of the threats of the Colonial Unionists.

"1st. A slave employed in the boiling-house. He was a very stout negro, and uncommonly well dressed for a slave. He was laid down on the ground, held by two men, and flogged on the naked breech in the mode I have described, receiving 39 lashes. I was afterwards assured by one of the book-keepers that this negro had really committed no offence, but that the overseer had him punished to *spite* a book-keeper

under whose charge this slave was at the time, and with whom he had a difference; and, as he could not flog the book-keeper, he flogged the slave. Such at least was the account I received from a third party, another book-keeper. I could scarcely have given credit to such an allegation, had I not heard of similar cases on other plantations, on authority I had no cause to doubt.

"2nd & 3rd. Two young women. This punishment took place one evening on the barbecue, where pimento is dried. Mr. M'Lean, the overseer, and I, were sitting in the window-seat of his hall; and I was just remarking to him that I observed the drivers took great pride in being able to crack their whips loud and well. While we were thus conversing, the gang of young slaves, employed in plucking pimento, came in with their basket-loads. The head book-keeper as usual proceeded to examine the baskets, to ascertain that each slave had duly performed the task allotted. The baskets of two poor girls were pronounced deficient; and the book-keeper immediately ordered them to be flogged. The overseer did not interfere, nor ask a single question, the matter not being deemed of sufficient importance to require his interference, though this took place within a few yards of the open window where we were sitting. One of the girls was instantly laid down, her back parts uncovered in the usual brutal and indecent manner, and the driver commenced flogging—every stroke upon her flesh gave a loud crack, and the wretched creature at the same time calling out in agony, 'Lord! Lord! Lord!' 'That,' said the overseer, turning to me, with a chuckling laugh, 'that is the best cracking, by G—d!' The other female was then flogged also on the bare posteriors, but not quite so severely. They received, as usual, each 39 lashes.

"4th & 5th. On another occasion I saw two girls from 10 to 13 years of age, flogged by order of the overseer. They belonged to the second gang, employed in cane-weeding, and were accused of having been idle that morning. Two other girls of the same age were brought up to hold them down. They got each 39.

"6th & 7th. After this I saw two young men flogged (very severely) in the cooper's yard. I did not learn their offence.

"8th. On another occasion, a man in the road leading from New Ground to Golden Spring. We met this man while riding out, and for some offence which I did not learn (for by that time I had found my enquiries on such points had become offensive,) the overseer called a driver from the field and ordered him 39 on the spot.

"9th & 10th. Two young men before breakfast, for having slept too long. They were mule-drivers, and it being then crop time, they had been two days and a night previously at work without sleep. As the overseer and I were going out at day-break (the sun was not yet up,) we found them only putting the harness on their mules. They ought, according to the regulations then prescribed on the plantation, to have been out half an hour sooner; and for this offence they received a very severe flogging.

"11th. A girl who had been missing for some days, having absconded from the plantation for fear of punishment.

"I shall mention only other two cases which particularly excited my sympathy; for after a few weeks, although my moral abhorrence of slavery continued to increase, my sensibility to the sight of physical suf-